



How to Start a Job Club in a Public Library

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Why a job club?

For most job seekers, especially those who are unemployed, finding a job is a very stressful, emotional process. Job seekers are also great job lead resources for each other because they are the ones browsing company job listings and job boards daily. A job club allows attendees to share:

- Emotional support
- Share Job search experiences (interviews)
- Job leads and employer information

One customer told me that when her husband, the main source of income in their family, lost his job "it was like a bomb went off."

Why in a library?

Most libraries have meeting room space that could accommodate a small-medium sized group. (Make sure to reserve the room in advance and check to see if it is usually available during that date and time before you decide on a day to meet regularly.)

Libraries also have lots of resources (databases, computers, books) that the job seeker can learn about and use while at the library.

What is my role?

- As facilitator your role is to **provide the space and guide the structure for the meeting, not necessarily take part in/dominate the job search discussion.**
- Try to avoid the urge to tell them all about library resources. This is a time for them to share their lead, experiences, and feelings. You might want to have a printed list of resources for job seekers to give to new members.
- Start the meeting by introducing yourself, stating the purpose and asking for introductions from new members.
- Initiate discussion.
- Provide any new tips or news you have found since the last meeting.
- Keep the group on topic and following the agenda.
- Adjourn the meeting on time.
- **When you have established a group that attends regularly, you can ask one of the regularly attending members to take over facilitation.**

During most of the meeting, stay quiet and let the attendees do the talking. You may even step out for a while if you feel comfortable leaving the group alone. Attendees may feel self conscious talking about some topics with a "library employee" in the room.

What to if only one person shows up?

Ask them if they would like to stay for an "mini tour" of the library's databases, books and programs that can help them with their job search. (Databases)

DISCUS Databases:

- Ferguson's Career Guidance Center
- Learning Express
- Career EBook Collection

What if it doesn't work?

Publicity? How are you spreading the word?

- Make sure the Job Club info is in all of your regular PR efforts; try to get an announcement on your Web site's home page and in your print publication.
- Create full page flyers to post in popular community gathering places (coffee shop, YMCA).
- Make 1/4 sheet flyers for customers to take with them, and have them available at service desks.

Patience?

- It often takes a while to get the word out. The first few weeks are usually going to have low attendance.

What if it really doesn't work?

Change location? Time? Day?

Referrals to other Job Clubs: If you don't want to start a Job Club of your own, compile a list of established Job Clubs in your area to give to interested customers. Many churches have started Job Clubs.

For additional resources on starting a Job Help Club, go to:

http://www.quintcareers.com/job_club.html

Job Help Club Outline

Purpose: To provide those who are unemployed and actively seeking employment with a place to meet other job seekers and share job searching tips, support and experiences.

Facilitation: For the first few meetings, the group would be facilitated by a library employee. However, once the group began to attract regular attendees, one of the regular attendees would facilitate the group.

Meetings: once weekly, one hour

Agenda (same for each meeting):

1. Introductions - greeting of new members
2. Statement of purpose
3. Good news? Members share any good news such as job offers and calls for interviews.
4. Discussion of this week's topic : _____
5. Open Discussion
6. Ideas for topics for future meetings (guest speakers?)
7. Closing – Members share their goals for the week

Topics for meetings:

- Networking
- Search techniques: Share ideas, contacts, leads
- Resume discussion – Do I need to tweak my resume? Members bring copies of their resume for the group and offer suggestions to each other
- Interviewing – What works, what doesn't? Members share their experiences with interviewing and offer advice.
- Does social networking work - Members share their experiences with using LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. to network for jobs.
- Budgeting – Any money saving tips to share?
- Life beyond the job search – What are you doing to keep motivated and active during your period of unemployment?
- Show and tell – Do you know someone who would like to be a guest speaker for the group. Sign them up!
- Job Fairs – Have you been? What was your impression? Tips or recommendations?
- Mock interviews – club members pair up and practice their interviewing skills with mock interviews